

# USDA/APHIS/VS -Texas Area Office

## ANIMAL PRODUCT EXPORT

### Express Mail Tracking

[Fed-Ex Tracking](#)

[UPS Tracking](#)

[U.S. Postal Service Tracking](#)

[Lone Star Overnight Tracking](#)

[DHL Tracking](#)

### User Fee Information

[User Fee](#) – Fiscal Year 2012

### Product Information Links

**IREGs:** <http://www.aphis.usda.gov/regulations/vs/iregs/products/>

[Blank VS 16-4](#)

[Blank VS 16-4a](#)

[Blank VS 16-4 & 16-4a Combined](#)

[Instructions for VS 16-4](#)

[Sample VS 16-4](#)

[Sample VS 16-4a](#)

[Sample VS 16-4 pg 1 of Combined](#)

[Sample Texas Affidavit](#)

# How to Prepare and Request a VS 16-4 Export Health Certificate

## Step 1: Locate the specific requirements for the product being exported

Go to the USDA's website for International Animal Product Export Regulations (IREGs):

<http://www.aphis.usda.gov/regulations/vs/iregs/products/>

Scroll to the bottom of the page and locate **List of Countries**. Click on the letter for the name of the country (i.e. "M" for Mexico). Then click on the country. Read the information carefully. Usually there is more general information about export to that country in the first section, and as you scroll down there will be links for specific products. Click on the link for the specific product you are exporting (i.e. "Milk and/or Dairy Products (Bovine Origin) for Human Consumption"). There will be a date to the right of the product listing, which indicates when it was last updated. **YOU SHOULD CHECK THE IREGS EVERY TIME TO ENSURE THERE HAVE BEEN NO CHANGES!** If there is no listing for the product you want to export, you should ask your importer to request an import permit from the country. The import permit should list the requirements.

## Step 2: Prepare the VS 16-4

The VS 16-4 is available for download on the IREGs website listed above. Scroll to the middle of the page and locate the sentence in blue that says "[More Information regarding the new Adobe forms and VS security paper for animal product certificates.](#)" Click on the link. That will open up a whole new section on the webpage. This section contains information about the electronic 16-4 and use of security paper. If you scroll down further, you will find links to the [VS Form 16-4](#), [VS Form 16-4A](#), [Combined VS form 16-4 and VS form 16-4A](#), and [Special instructions for exporters regarding the preparation of the new VS forms](#). The link at "special instructions" provides technical information on exactly how to fill out the 16-4. There is a sample VS 16-4 and 16-4A included as an attachment to this information sheet as well.

Please note that the "product" block can **ONLY** contain information about the type of product, quantity, unit of measure, and species of origin. If any of this information is missing, or if there is additional information present, we will not be able to endorse. The type

of product should be generic (i.e. “cheese”) and should not list product brand names (i.e. “USDA’s Special Sliced Swiss Cheese”). If you need to list specific brand names (would be necessary if your affidavit referred to a specific brand), then that information would go in the identification block. Please also note that we highly recommend that you use a unique reference number in the identification block – doing so will help us locate information about your certificate if there is a problem. Invoice numbers, PO numbers, or internal company reference numbers may all be used.

Please pay special attention to the information on how to complete the VS Form 16-4A, which is the “page 2”. It is critical that whichever block is being continued on page 2 states “see page 2” in that block, and that the VS Form 16-4A states what is being continued directly above the information.

### **Step 3: Prepare the required documentation to accompany the 16-4**

Most often the statements that must be listed on the VS 16-4 are made on the basis of a notarized affidavit. The affidavit must come from the manufacturer of the product (there are a few exceptions to this rule, contact our office for more information if you think your situation falls into one of these exceptions). There is a specific format that is preferred (included as an attachment to this information sheet). While the exact format may vary a little, all affidavits must meet the following requirements:

1. Be typed, notarized (signed before a notary public), and dated within the previous 365 days.
2. Contain the exact text of the affidavit-based declarations.
3. Be on company letterhead and signed by an individual in a position of authority (e.g., owner, president, chief executive officer, or quality control manager) within the company who is qualified to verify the information provided.
4. Contain a description of the individual’s position within the company, which demonstrates qualifications to make or verify the statements and infers that the individual has first-hand knowledge that the declaration is true.
5. State that the individual is authorized to represent the company in this manner.
6. Contain the following statement above the signature: “I certify that the statements listed above are true to the best of my knowledge and belief.”
7. Contain the typed name and title of the signing individual below the signature.

The original affidavit must be mailed to our office. It is valid for 1 year from the date SIGNED, unless it is a lot-specific affidavit (which is only valid for that lot and shipment). Keep a scanned copy – you will submit this copy to our office each time you submit a 16-4.

If you are using an import permit as the basis for your statements on the 16-4, you must prepare an English translation, and send us a copy of the original import permit as well as the translation.

#### **Step 4: Submit the VS 16-4 and documentation**

All 16-4s must be submitted electronically. There must be a Texas connection in order for our office to process your certificate. In other words, the product must be made in Texas, or shipped from Texas, or the exporter or freight forwarder must be located in Texas. You must submit the 16-4 in a fillable PDF format, not a scanned version. Scanned copies of import permits (if the information is not on the IREGs) and affidavits must also be submitted. We do **NOT** need copies of invoices or other company documents. Our email address is:

[expcerttx@aphis.usda.gov](mailto:expcerttx@aphis.usda.gov)

Emails received before 10 a.m. business days will be processed the same day (barring any unavoidable problems, i.e. an ice storm, or our email server going down). Each email submitted must contain the following information (in English):

- number of certificates requested
- payment method (fee is \$49.00 per certificate, payable by USDA account, credit card, check, or money order. Please note that we cannot send endorsed certificates until payment is received. **If you are mailing payment, please indicate this fact, and indicate expected arrival, method of delivery, and name of sender.** If you have a USDA account number, provide the name on the account as well as the number. If you are using a credit card, provide the name of the cardholder, billing address, card number, security code (3 digits on back for Visa/MC/Discover, 4 digits on front for AmEx), and expiration date. We do not keep any credit card information on file. If you are paying by check, please note that the address must be pre-printed, and a driver's license number or tax ID number should be provided as well.
- return method – if you do not provide a return method (i.e. an electronic airbill) your certificate will be returned via U.S. Mail. It is usually easiest to attach an electronic airbill (i.e. FedEx, UPS). **If you are mailing a return envelope, please indicate this fact, and indicate expected arrival, method of delivery, and name of sender.** You can also mail us pre-addressed airbills for FedEx or UPS, for us to keep on file. If you have airbills on file in our office, please indicate this and include the name and address on the airbill you want us to use.
- contact information in case we have questions (U.S. phone number preferred, we are unable to call internationally)

**Contact Information for USDA, APHIS, VS, Texas Export  
Section:**

<b>PHONE</b>	<b>(512) 383-2411</b>
<b>FAX</b>	<b>(512) 916-5591</b>
<b>EMAIL</b>	<b><a href="mailto:expcerttx@aphis.usda.gov">expcerttx@aphis.usda.gov</a></b>

**OFFICE HOURS ARE 8:00 AM TO 4:30 PM CENTRAL  
STANDARD TIME  
WE ARE CLOSED ON ALL FEDERAL HOLIDAYS**